

Judicial Programs and Services

Mission

To provide support to the courts and court personnel to make their efforts more effective.

Summary of Activities

The **Supreme Court** of Indiana, through its judicial programs and services, seeks to enhance the public's access to justice by implementing programs aimed to increase the efficiency of the state's court system.

The Office of Guardian Ad Litem/Court Appointed Special Advocates administers partial State funding to eighty counties to provide services to victims of child abuse and neglect. In eleven counties, the Court has instituted Family Courts pilot projects, the goal of which is to integrate all legal proceedings involving the family before a single judge. The Race and Gender Fairness Commission has been working to develop ways to make sure that justice is dispensed fairly in Indiana.

The Conference for Legal Education Opportunity, which the Court administers, provides minority and disadvantaged law students with assistance in their transition to and completion of law school. Each year the program admits 30 students.

The Court is seeking to improve the public's access to information about the courts. The Judicial Technology and Automation Committee has been formed to address that issue. Implementation of a comprehensive plan is underway to improve trial court computerized case management systems and the sharing of electronic data. Finally, the Court ensures that the state's judicial officials are working where they are needed most by using "weighted caseload measures" to apportion the shortage of judicial officials among existing judicial officers.

The Indiana Judicial Conference, through the **Indiana Judicial Center**, provides a variety of services for judicial officers, court personnel, and the public. The Conference provides continuing legal education for the State's judges, trains probation officers, administers the court alcohol and drug program, administers the Interstate Compact for the transfer of probationers to and from Indiana, and maintains a roster of juvenile residential placement facilities. The Conference assists the Supreme Court in the formulation of policies on judicial administration, juvenile justice, drafts books to assist trial judges, prepares legal guidelines, and in cooperation with the Indiana Judges Association, publishes the pattern jury instructions in use in Indiana.

The **Prosecuting Attorneys Council** further assists state judicial officials by providing legal research, training, information technology assistance, and legislative liaison functions to county prosecuting attorneys and their deputies.

External Factors

Court judicial services and programs are externally affected by the number of civil law suits filed and by the number of criminal prosecutions commenced in Indiana. In 2001, the trial courts in Indiana disposed of 1,779,280 cases, the highest number in Indiana history. Each new case filed may, for example, directly or indirectly increase the amount of pauper funding needed, the level of resources needed for regulation of the legal profession, or the number of citizens seeking access to or information about the courts. All activities associated with meeting these demands have steadily increased over time.

Evaluation and Accomplishments

Growing caseloads have resulted in increased demand for services provided by the Court. Despite the increased demand, access to justice is also at an all-time high thanks to Court initiatives. Besides program increases in the areas of race and gender fairness awareness and access to information through the internet, the Court has been active in encouraging the growth of local pro bono organizing committees to help provide poor people with civil legal problems with free or low cost legal representation.



Similarly, through the Public Defender Commission, the Court continues to administer a program of reimbursements to counties for pauper defense services in capital and non-capital cases.

In addition, the Court has been active in revising the jury rules and is in the process of evaluating major changes to the rules governing the ethical obligations of lawyers.



The Lake County Courthouse

Plans for the Biennium

A more mobile population has multiplied the numbers of probationers and parolees transferred to and from Indiana. To address the concerns that come with the tracking of these persons, the 113th Indiana General Assembly passed legislation to join the new national Interstate Compact. The Judicial Center will administer the Compact in Indiana.

The judicial offices hope to continue and expand the programs identified above. The Court seeks to decide cases fairly and promptly, to integrate the use of technology in the State's trial courts with a standardized case management system, to ensure access to justice for all regardless of income or language barriers, to oversee a well-run trial court system, and to maintain high standards for the practice of law in Indiana.

